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SUBJECT: STAFFDEL DORAN DISCUSSES UNMIS AND UNAMID MANDATE
ISSUES

Classified By: CDA Robert E. Whitehead for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) SUMMARY: In a meeting with civilian and military UN Mission leadership in Sudan, staffers from the House Foreign Affairs Committee were called upon to advocate for more ambitious mandate execution of the United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) and the United Nations-African Union Hybrid Mission in Darfur (UNAMID). UN Officials said the combination of unclear member state expectations and the UN Mission leadership's conservative interpretation of its mandate have led to a limited exercise of the civilian protection mandate of UNMIS and UNAMID. END SUMMARY

UNAMID Provides Scant Civilian Protection

12. (C) Acting UNAMID Chief of Staff Miguel Martin and Chief of Military Operations Lt. Colonel Fred Muziraguharara told visiting staffers from the House Foreign Relations Committee August 26 that the UNAMID mandate, coupled with the UN leadership's interpretation of the latter did not allow for active protection of civilians by UNAMID forces. UNAMID commanders for the Rwandan sector, including Lt. Col. Fred Muziraguharara in El Fasher, North Darfur, stated that the decision on whether to intervene on behalf of civilians was "purely political," and that under the current interpretation of the UNAMID mandate, UN forces did not intervene to protect civilians. Muziraguharara acknowledged that the only circumstance in which civilians are protected is when UNAMID forces act in self-defense and civilians are protected at the same time.

13. (C) UNAMID commanders lamented that equipment gaps and lack of capacity are hindering UNAMID's mission. However, when pressed by members of the Staffdel to provide specific tasks that could not be accomplished due to a lack of equipment, the commanders were unable to provide concrete examples.

14. (C) Lisa Grande, UNMIS Deputy Resident Representative and Humanitarian Coordinator for Southern Sudan, told the Staffdel that the civilian protection mandate is not currently in use in Sudan by either UNAMID or UNMIS. She attributed the failure to exercise this mandate to a conservative interpretation of the UN's mandate and mission goals by UN Peacekeeping Operations in New York.

UN Mission Leadership Within Sudan Lacking

15. (C) Grande told the Staffdel that she is concerned about the lack of robust leadership for UNAMID and UNMIS. She said leadership difficulties stem from the need for American, Canadian and Western European staff to actively press for civilian protection. According to Grande, the largely South Asian (Indian and Bangladeshi) civilian and military leadership's interpretation of its mandate has led to its being exercised in an extremely cautious and conservative manner. Grande noted that some staff in both UNAMID and UNMIS are frustrated by the failure to protect civilians. She complained that both UNAMID and UNMIS have been a "continual disappointment to all but Khartoum" due to Mission inaction and the failure to challenge the Khartoum regime.

16. (C) Grande said that a large part of the problem is due to the failure of the Peacekeeping Operations division in New York to press for more ambitious objectives. Grande stated that the "bar has been set very low". UNMIS and UNAMID have been tasked with "monitoring and verification", but these are minimal goals, she said.

Member Advocacy Could Improve Performance

17. (C) To solve the problem, Grande said that member states must make their wishes known; UNAMID and UNMIS mission goals and objectives are member state driven. Congressional interest would raise expectations from within the Administration, and put pressure on UN Peacekeeping Operations in New York to insist that Mission commanders in

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Sudan be more proactive. However, when "UN Mission leadership does not feel supported, they are not willing to put themselves out there," she said. In 2008, the Secretary General's Special Representative (SRSG) was declared persona-non-grata for challenging the Khartoum government. The lack of support that the SRSG received made a big impact on the United Nations organizations in Sudan, she added. In her view, the failure of UNMIS and UNAMID to think proactively and challenge Khartoum stems in part from this incident. In addition, Grande said that the appointment of more forward-leaning chief of staff and force commanders for both UNAMID and UNMIS is also needed. This could be achieved if more Americans, Canadians, and Western Europeans were added to the current staff. Grande discounted claims of equipment gaps by commanders, describing what she saw as the failure of both missions to carry out their mandates as a failure of political will.

WHITEHEAD